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U. S. Government announces \$5 million assistance to 17,000 Sri Lankan families

Colombo, November 17, 2010: The Embassy of the United States and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are pleased to announce the handover of \$5 million to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Valerie Fowler and FAO Country Representative, Mr. Patrick Evans, signed the agreement Tuesday which officially transferred the funds.

Over 17,000 Sri Lankan families will benefit directly from this grant which will provide paddy seed and the equipment needed to plant and harvest it. The money will also help train farmers and renovate irrigation canals and local tanks. Through such support, 55,000 Sri Lankans in the North who have recently returned to their homes will be able to rebuild their lives after nearly three decades of displacement and disruption. This is another sign of the international community's ongoing commitment to assist the government of Sri Lanka in its efforts to bring political and economic stability to the places most affected by the war.

At the signing ceremony U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Valerie Fowler said, "Like most U.S. foreign aid, this money is not a loan but a grant and it will directly benefit local organizations and individuals. Local government officials will help plan and implement the assistance. And the Government of Sri Lanka will help prepare the land for planting and will provide a fertilizer

subsidy to the farmers who get the seeds. The strong levels of support, cooperation and collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka are a hallmark of the successful implementation of these programs.”



U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Valerie Fowler and FAO Country Representative, Mr. Patrick Evans, signing the agreement Tuesday which officially transferred US\$ 5 million.